



STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Part I Meeting

Held on Zoom on Monday 18 September 2023

		<u>Meeting Attendance</u>
Present:	Tina Coates	(1 out of 1)
	Paul Britton	(1 out of 1)
	Pippa Goodwin	(1 out of 1)
	Rob Lewis	(1 out of 1)
	Gillian May (Group Principal & Chief Executive)	(1 out of 1)
	Ian Thomson	(1 out of 1)
Apologies:	Angela Wellings	
In attendance:	Tracy Reeve	(1 out of 1)
	Amanda Down	Director of Governance
	Anne Entwistle	Principal Sixth Form
	Karen Griffiths	Principal FE
	Jessica Berry	VP Sixth Form
		Vice Principal FE

MINUTE

No

The meeting started at 5pm.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Angela Wellings.

2. **Notification of Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other business notified.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No Member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 5 June 2023**

The Vice Principal FE (JB) highlighted an error in her job title – the term ‘Vice’ was missing.

ACTION: JB’s job title to be corrected in the minutes.

Subject to this error being corrected the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 June 2023, having been previously circulated to members, were **AGREED** as an accurate record and the Chair’s approval would be recorded.

All Members were agreed.

5. **Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting held on 5 June 2023**

It was NOTED that all matters arising had been actioned or were on track for timely completion at their due date.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6. **Governance Summary Report**

6.1 **Board Membership**

The Director of Governance presented a paper which detailed the Members of the Corporation with cessation dates, sub-committee membership and current Chairs of committees.

ACTION

TR

MINUTE
No

ACTION

Governors were reminded that the current Board membership of TWFCG was determined at 18 members, but TWFCG was currently in a transition period post-merger where the Instrument and Articles allowed a slightly higher number of members. This was initially 21 members, but TR confirmed that the membership of the Board had reduced during 2022/23 as members left the Board at the end of their terms of office. The membership would be back to the pre-merger determined number of 18 members by the end of 2023.

The meeting considered the Governors' terms of office that would end during 2023:

- External Governors. The meeting noted that there were two governors who were coming to the end of their second term of office:
 - Peter Tyndale (7 October 2023)
 - Anthony Haines (7 December 2023)

The meeting considered the two sub-committee vacancies that would arise as a result of this. TR informed the meeting that existing Governor Signe Sutherland had asked to become a member of Resources Committee which would fill the vacancy on Resources after PT reached the end of his term of office.

The meeting APPROVED Signe Sutherland becoming a member of TWFCG Resources Committee with immediate effect.

All Members agreed.

- Sixth Form Academic Staff Governor TR informed the meeting that this post was still unfilled after the previous staff governor term of office ended on 31 March 2023. The vacancy was going to be readvertised week commencing 25 September 2023, the Principal sixth form would highlight the vacancy at her staff briefings.

ACTION: Sixth Form academic governor post to be highlighted at staff briefings.

AD

6.2 **Revised Meeting Timetable 2023/24**

The Director of Governance presented a revised draft schedule of Corporation & Committee meetings for the academic year 2023/24 which included an additional Strategy Governance & Search Committee meeting in November 2023.

- Corporation and sub-committee schedule of business 2023/24

The Director of Governance presented a baseline Annual Schedule of Business covering the sub-committees and Board. TR highlighted that this schedule was the minimum work to cover legislative and good practice guidelines. The meeting commended this useful annual schedule which they had not seen before.

The revised meeting timetable and Annual Schedule of Business 2023/24 were APPROVED and would be RECOMMENDED to the Board for approval (4 October 2023).

TR

All Members were agreed.

6.3 **External Review of Governance at TWFCG**

The Director of Governance (TR) reminded the meeting that it was now mandatory for each FE College Corporation to commission an external review of Governance on a triennial basis (the first review to be undertaken by 31 July 2024). This had been made a condition of funding in spring 2022. Members of SG&S Committee were reminded that Rockborn LLP – the consultants used for the merger project - had been commissioned to undertake this external review during the autumn term 2023. TR informed the meeting that she had a scoping meeting with the governance consultant working for Rockborn on Tuesday 2 October. Governors (PB) suggested that this review should consider how TWFCG Governing Body was responding to the requirements of the Skills Act.

The plans for the external governance review were NOTED.

ACTION: Scoping of the review to include a consideration of how the TWFCG Governing Body was responding to the requirements of the Skills Act.

TR/
Rockborn

6.4 **Internal Review of Governance 2022/23**

TR confirmed that the Chair of TWFCG Corporation would undertake her usual round of 'one-to-one' meetings with all Governors during October 2023. These meetings had

unfortunately slipped from the planned completion date of August 2023 due to unforeseen college staff leave. TR also highlighted that she would carry out an internal self-assessment of Governance at TWFCG 2022/23 during September 2023. This would include seeking feedback from individual governors as well as assessing the Governing Body performance against its adopted code, the English Colleges Code of Good Governance.

ACTION: The governance self-assessment (including attendance data for 2022/23) to be brought to the next meeting of the Strategy Governance & Search Committee (21 November 2023).

TR

The Governance update report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

7. **'Mirror Board' proposal**

The CEO/ Group Principal (GM) introduced a new proposal to enhance governance at TWFCG. GM informed the meeting that she had recently become aware of this initiative which was being implemented at Frimley NHS Trust. GM highlighted that this initiative would support TWFCG's efforts to foster diversity and cultivate a diverse pool of future leaders within the organisation. The formation of a 'Mirror Board' would serve as a platform to reflect the insights and perspectives of the college's diverse workforce.

The meeting noted that the objectives of this initiative would be to:

- i. **Develop Future Talent:** To nurture a cadre of potential future leaders.
- ii. **Enhance Board Diversity:** To increase the representation of individuals with protected characteristics at the Board level.
- iii. **Foster Collaboration:** To promote collaborative working relationships across the entire organization.
- iv. **Encourage Diverse Thought:** To infuse diversity of thought into the Corporation's decision-making processes.
- v. **Support EDI Goals:** To contribute to the achievement of TWFCG's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategic objectives.

The CEO gave the meeting an outline of how the Mirror Board programme would work to cultivate a diverse pipeline of future leaders across the college group. SLT would invite expressions of interest from individuals who were keen on participating as part of their professional development. There would be a particular interest in individuals who would bring fresh perspectives to Board discussions covering all aspects of diversity including neuro diversity and cognitive diversity. It was noted that members of the Mirror Board would not be 'governors' or Members of the WFCG Corporation and they would have no formal decision-making powers.

Members of the Mirror Board would have access to a comprehensive development package, which would include a reciprocal mentoring relationship with a WFCG board member and various other learning and development opportunities. These roles would offer a genuine opportunity to influence the Board's decision-making processes and shape developments across the organisation. Key discussion points would be shared with the Mirror Board before agenda items were considered by the Corporation, ensuring that Mirror Board members had a direct voice at the heart of the decision-making process. The opportunity would offer staff members or external stakeholders real-life experience operating as an Executive Director/Board member in a secure and growth-focused environment. It would allow them to engage with board agenda items, contribute to strategies, and influence decisions.

The meeting agreed that this was a very interesting concept and would help the Board gain access to a more diverse range of views. GM highlighted the dual benefit of better representation and staff development. The meeting noted that two of the College's adult learners would be involved in the Mirror Board at Frimley NHS Trust. The benefits of having a 'lived experience' input to decision making was commended by the members of SG&S Committee who were keen that the CEO and Director of Governance should explore this initiative further with a view to implementing it at TWFCG. Governors suggested that any Mirror Board members could be included in future Governors Strategy Days to maximise their input and impact. The meeting sought, and was given, assurance that this additional work would not be too onerous for the college management and Director of Governance.

It was AGREED that the Mirror Board proposal should be taken forward to Corporation for consideration with a recommendation for implementation from SS&G Committee.

GM/ TR

8. Strategic Map update

The CEO (GM) introduced the WFCG Strategic Map 2022-25 which had been reviewed by the SLT one year after the merger. The meeting noted that there was not significant change but a few amendments to address repetition and answer some questions that had been posed by a member of the FE Commissioner Team who was acting as a mentor to VP Sixth Form. There was now an enhanced focus on skills as the new Local Skills Plans (LSIPs) were driving the focus on national, regional, and local skills needs.

Principal Sixth Form (AD) highlighted the changes that had been made:

- Former Priority 2 (Financial Health) had been combined with former Priority 6 (Resources) in Priority 5
- Key statements from former Priority 2 and 6 had been combined: new statement on staffing and estates strategy
- Change of wording in Priority 2: 'Through professional development our teaching, learning and assessment are graded at least good' and 'development of employability skills including English, maths and digital to ensure excellent student progression and outcomes'
- Combined statements from previous map now read 'Integrate digital technology within the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning and ensure all students have access to and support in using digital technology'
- Key statement 'Inclusion – the right programme for every learner' removed from Priority 3 and replaced with 'personally designed study programmes and learning experiences at all levels that are based on starting point, career aim and individual needs of each learner'
- The first statement in the first box of Priority 3 had been amended to 'strengthen our student welfare and support, financial, pastoral, careers and IAG provision for all adult, HE and apprenticeship learners'. The final bullet point in the first box amended to 'develop college wide awareness of neuro-diverse learners and those with mental health needs'.

AD highlighted that the Strategic Map was treated as a living document which needed review on an ongoing basis to check the content and order of priority. The meeting discussed how this documents was shared at all levels of college staff to ensure that all were working to the current priorities. VP Sixth Form confirmed that SLT made sure that this document was shared with Heads of Department who were writing their self-assessment reports and undertaking staff personal development reviews (PDRs); the format of the college appraisal system required staff objectives to be centred on the Strategic Map of TWFCG.

Governors highlighted that Priority 3 was not marked as being overseen by a Corporation sub-committee. In addition, the terminology for the Priority 5 committee was wrong – it should be amended to 'Resources Committee'. Governors sought clarity on how the 'nominated' governance committees received feedback on progress against the specified strategic targets. The CEO confirmed that she would take that as an action to ensure that a clear mechanism for feedback was in place.

The Chair of the Committee commended the format and the vision and purpose embedded in the Strategy Map. The clear and concise priorities were almost like an 'elevator pitch' that all staff should be able to articulate. SLT Members agreed that they needed to ensure that 'ownership' of the Strategy Map was embedded at all levels of the organisation.

The WFCG Strategy May 2022-25 was NOTED and RECEIVED.

ACTION:

- i. Ensure clear process in place for formal feedback to committees on progress against Strategy Map priorities.***
- ii. Amend the details of 'nominated' sub-committees:***
 - a. Add the governance sub-committee with responsibility for Priority 3 (Quality & Curriculum Committee).***
 - b. Change the name of the 'nominated' sub-committee for Priority 5 to***

GM/ TR

**AD/
Marketing**

Resources Committee

9. **Update on new strategic direction for Windsor College**

The meeting discussed the new proposals for Windsor that had been approved by the Board in July 2023. The meeting discussed the points made in relation to individual College branding by governors after this meeting; there would be a continued emphasis on maintaining individual college identities within the WFCG overall brand.

Governors sought confirmation on how Langley and the other campuses would be included in this positive development work. Vice Principal Sixth Form (KG) confirmed that although the new Creative Screen Industries focus would be centred on Windsor College there would be a positive impact across the other campuses. The meeting discussed the very positive enrolment at Langley College for 2023/24 with numbers exceeding target and parents and learners keen to enrol. The reputation of Langley College was now much improved and staff morale and enthusiasm was also now stronger.

The meeting discussed some governance concern about any negative impact of moving Windsor College 16-18 delivery onto a four-day week. Principal Sixth Form (AD) confirmed that many courses were already delivered over four days and the advent of T levels would take that further. Governors were assured that a four-day week was popular with students and parents as it helped reduce student travel costs and enabled learners to have a part-time job as well as studying. AD suggested that SLT and the Governors might need to consider whether there was scope to make this change at Strode's as well as Windsor in the near future. However, it was noted that this change would be harder to implement at Strode's due to the large number of courses offered with most students taking two or three A Level courses.

The Update on the new Windsor College Strategy was NOTED

10. **Update on Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) projects**

The CEO (GM) presented a paper which provided an update with respect to the college's LSIF (Local Skills Improvement Fund) application for funding to deliver two key projects during the period October 2023 to March 2025. These two bids were for circa £1,040,000 and would fund courses in Creative Industries (Screen Skills) & Green Skills.

Governors were reminded that TWFCG had already been working collaboratively in partnership with the other FE Colleges in both Berkshire and Oxfordshire since 2021 as part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan process (LSIP). As a key partner in the earlier linked SDF2 (Strategic Development Fund) project during 2022-2023, TWFCG successfully delivered projects, primarily in the development of Green Skills facilities and curriculum drawing down funding of £300k through the SDF.

GM confirmed that the partnership of colleges had continued, and TWFCG had been working collaboratively to apply collectively for funds under the LSIF (Local Skills Improvement Fund), linking directly to clear skills priorities and gaps as identified in the LSIP. GM confirmed that the college was applying to deliver two projects as part of the overall bid in Creative Industries (Screen Skills) and Green Skills (Construction and Engineering). Governors noted that, in addition to linking directly to the LSIP, both projects also supported the college strategic aims to grow learner numbers and diversify provision. This was after the approval of the new strategic direction for Windsor College – developing it as a specialist centre for the delivery of Creative |Industries/ Screen Skills training – which had been approved by the Board in July 2023.

An application for the LSIF funding had been submitted via Activate Learning, (the lead college in the partnership) and projects were expected to start in October 2023. The projects would run over two academic years from October 2023 to March 2025 and would access a mixture of capital and revenue funding. The total funding for Berkshire through the LSIF would be £2.4 million and the funding applied for by TWFCG was £1,040,000; capital funding of £800,000 and revenue funding of £240,000.

The two Vice-Principals (Sixth Form and FE) gave the meeting more detail on each of the two separate projects.

➤ **Creative (Screen Industries)**

VP Sixth Form (KG) outlined the LSIP project which would be focussed on the Creative Industries with delivery at Windsor College. Funding applied for from the LSIF was a total of £820,000 with £700,000 to support the capital developments (Year 1 £225,000 and Year 2 £475,000) and £120,000 revenue funding to support a range of development and delivery activities during Year 1.

KG outlined the overall aim of the project to significantly upgrade facilities at Windsor College to meet the requirements for the delivery of Screen Industry programmes which had been identified by employers as a skills shortage areas. The project would seek to increase learner numbers, widen the reach of the college and make the college central to the Berkshire and wider UK film industry as a key point of training and delivery. KG confirmed that the college would work with expert industry partners including CUBE Studios and Resource Productions to repurpose and upgrade internal spaces at Windsor College, including the redesign of existing teaching areas to create a Creative Industry Specialist Zone. The proposed facilities would include an LED Volume video studio to support virtual and augmented reality delivery, a post-production edit suite with online and offline suites and a studio with hair and make-up facilities to support industry standard training. The second phase of the project, to be developed during the academic year 2024/25, would include an industry standard sound and music engineering and edit suite. In addition, the project would undertake development work for apprenticeships in Hair, Wigs, Make-up and Prosthetics, Production Assistant and Junior Content Producer and would also develop and deliver some short course provision for adults in Costume and Props. Governors were assured that the project linked directly to the skills needs and actions proposed as priorities for Screen Industries in the LSIP.

KG confirmed that a lot of research had been undertaken with specialist employers to ensure that the proposed equipment – to support LED virtual production – was the correct specification and would address the skills needs for the industry. KG confirmed that a separate T Level equipment bid in this curriculum area would also be made. The Chair of SG&S Committee (TC) sought confirmation that the college would have access to suitably qualified staff to deliver the courses. KG confirmed that the delivery would be facilitated through a combination of upskilling current staff, recruiting new and working with specialist resource production companies to deliver short courses to adults (up-skilling current industry staff). The Chair sought, and was given, confirmation that the LSIF funding was not a loan and did not require the College to contribute matched funding. KG reiterated the time limits for the college to spend the funding but assured governors that work was already underway to identify the appropriate equipment and to start spending the funding. The meeting also sought confirmation that the correct security was in place for this expensive equipment and KG confirmed that security as well as IT and fire prevention upgrades would also be considered in liaison with the Head of Estates. The timing for the first students was confirmed as hopeful for September 2024 but this would depend on timely approval of the LSIF bid. Principal Sixth Form (AD) informed the meeting that some adult short courses in this curriculum area would be delivered before Autumn 2024 but that would be predicated on specialist sector input to the delivery i.e. working with employers. KG confirmed that representatives from CUBE Studios would be attending the Windsor College Open Evening in October 2023.

➤ **Green Skills: Construction & Built Environment/ Energy/ Electric Vehicle**

VP Further Education (JB) gave the meeting a summary of this project which would build on the successful work already undertaken by the college under the SDF2. This work had developed and delivered a range of Green Construction Courses (particularly involving heat pumps), Electric Motor Vehicle and Tractor to over 200 adult learners on short programmes during the period Sept 2022 to March 2023. The college had also invested in a range of technology including heat pumps and an electric tractor to support delivery of the provision.

The meeting noted that extensive employer engagement activities had been undertaken as part of the original SDF project and these had identified skills needs from employers for the following areas: Retrofit, Domestic Ventilation and Insulation, Heat Pump Design installation, Solar PVT training and the Low Carbon Technology apprenticeship.

JB confirmed that the additional project funding now being sought under the LSIF was £220,000; of which with £100,000 was to support capital developments (Year 1 £75,000 &

Year 2 £25,000) and £120,000 revenue funding to support a range of development and delivery activities during the period October 2023 to March 2024. The meeting noted that the LSIF funding would support the purchase and installation of relevant Green Construction equipment to enable delivery of these programmes and would also support the development costs of Level 3 courses and the piloting and marketing of some delivery in the first year of the project. JB highlighted that a key issue in this curriculum area was the shortage of industry experts to deliver the training. As a result, the project funding would also be utilised to upskill college staff to attend relevant industry training and to undertake work placements with relevant employers. The provision would then become a commercial short course, or by accessing the Adult Education Budget if feasible.

JB highlighted that the courses developed under the SDF project were now being offered and delivered as full cost programmes through the expanded Green Skills Academy which now included the Land Based Training work at BCA. These included Air Source Heat Pump Courses, Water Regulations, Low Temperature Heating and Unvented Cylinders. The college was accessing funds for Heat Pump Training from BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy); £12,000 had been allocated and drawn down to date and an application had been made for additional funding. In addition, the college would be starting delivery of a Skills Bootcamp in Green Technologies and Retrofit funded via Thames Berkshire LEP in September 2023. JB informed the meeting that a proposal for a Low Carbon Heating apprenticeship had now been approved by IfATE and would be able to commence soon. Management were also looking at developing adult short courses in Lean Manufacturing using CNC machines that were already available in the college; strands of this work would be in place across Langley and BCA.

The meeting NOTED the LSIF update and commended the exciting developments within the curriculum

11. Any Urgent Business

There had been no urgent business notified.

- Enrolment 2023/24

Governors asked for a verbal update on Enrolment 2023/24 and the CEO shared the data which would be presented to Audit & Resources Committee on 20 September 2023. The meeting noted the current enrolment against ESFA allocation by college. GM reminded the meeting that the number of funded students for 2023/24 was 4,150. At the time of reporting, 16-19 ESFA learner headcount across the College Group was 4,508, 385 ahead of the prior year enrolment (4,123). Full time adult learners who would join these programmes numbered 145, growth of 25 on prior year (120). Against current retention rates (circa 80%) management estimated that this would equate to between £1.7m and £1.8m of lagged funding to be received in 2024/25. Members were reminded that this report was an early indicator of enrolment performance: for 16–19-year-olds, numbers could fluctuate until the census date in November when the final funded number was confirmed. For adults and apprentices, enrolment would continue through the year and updates would be reported for these and the Higher Education enrolments at the October Board meeting.

GM highlighted the very pleasing figures at Langley College which had exceeded its target of 1050 by 20% (1262). This level of recruitment at Langley had been in the post-merger plan with a target completion date of enrolment 2024/25. The fact that it had been achieved a year ahead of this demonstrated the benefits of the BCA and TWFCG merger. The meeting sought confirmation on what was driving the successful enrolment at Langley and GM confirmed that it was down to several factors: an improved demographic; the impact of higher GCSE grade boundaries for the first time since 2019; attracting students from West London and better progression for existing students especially for ESOL learners. Principal FE (AE) confirmed that the curriculum directors had put a lot of work into improving progression of existing learners through stronger Information and Guidance. AE highlighted the different 'feel' at Langley College which now had a 'busy, purposeful atmosphere'. Students were well behaved and respectful to staff and each other. There was also more engagement with parents.

MINUTE

No

Governors commended the progress at Langley College and the very strong enrolment across the whole college group.

The enrolment update was NOTED

ACTION

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm

Chair.....

Date.....

DRAFT